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ABSTRACT

Since the Internet has become a primary information source, this digest offers a list of online resources to assist teachers and educators in conducting research and curriculum development and in meeting the National Standards for Arts Education in Theatre. The digest provides brief summaries of three Web sites on theatre education. It then details the theatre content standards, and presents related research and supporting Web sites for each standard. Finally, it lists and describes important professional development organizations. (RS)

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Online Resources for Theatre Education.

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By Ping-Yun Sun

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Online Resources for Theatre Education

by Ping-Yun Sun

Research demonstrates that dramatic play has a strong impact on children's cognitive and social development as well as provides children with opportunities to learn to express their feelings and become sensitive to the values of others (Coney & Kanel, 1997). Theatrical expression—both oral and written language—is also a medium through which teachers may understand and interpret children's thinking (Sierra, 1997). Further, since drama has become an important method of understanding others and our own lives, children need to learn to appreciate, interpret, and evaluate it. Regrettably, theatre education has often been missing from school curricula (Wright, 2000).

The National Standards for Arts Education in Theatre, written by the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations, are designed as guidelines to introduce teachers and students to multiple aspects of this art form within an age-appropriate framework, to help them develop new breadth and depth for teaching and learning, and to encourage them to study the discipline as a professional practice (Mahlmann et al., 1994).

Since the Internet has become a primary information source, this Digest offers a list of online resources to assist teachers and educators in conducting research and curriculum development and in meeting the National Standards for Arts Education in Theatre. The Digest provides some general resources. It then details the theatre content standards, and presents related research and supporting websites for each standard. Finally, it lists and describes important professional development organizations.

General Resources:

Theatre Lesson Plan Exchange

<http://www.geocities.com/shalyndria13/plans.htm>

The Theatre Lesson Plan Exchange provides a large collection of lesson plans on all aspects of theatre and also includes resources on using drama to teach emotional intelligence and improvisation for social studies.

Children's Theatre Resource Webpage

<http://faculty-web.at.northwestern.edu/theater/tya/>

The mission of this award-winning website is to assist the growth of Children's Theatre into the 21st century by expanding the resources and information into Cyberspace.

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The WWW Virtual Library for Theatre and Drama

<http://vl-theatre.com/>

The WWW Virtual Library for Theatre and Drama offers links to international online articles, journals, museums, organizations, and theatre companies. It is a valuable site for amateurs, professionals, and students from all over the world.

Theatre content standards

Content Standard #1: Script writing by planning, recording, and creating improvisations based on personal experience, heritage, imagination, literature, and history.

Students are encouraged to create characters and environments for classroom dramatizations, to record the dialogue and improvisations, and to construct the scripts. Improvisation, often applied to strengthen social studies concepts, has been found to be effective in building relationships between teachers and students (Sierra, 1997).

Readers' Theatre Resources for teachers and students

<http://www.stemnet.nf.ca/CITE/langrt.htm>

This site is clear and comprehensive, and includes: (1) definition of readers' theatre; (2) samples of readers' theatre scripts; (3) an opportunity for writing your own readers' theatre scripts; (4) recommended resource books; and (5) recommended on-line resources.

Content Standard #2: Acting by playing roles, developing basic acting skills, communicating characters in improvisations.

Students imagine and analyze characters and their relationships, and they develop acting skills. By portraying roles in dramatic plays, students gain better understanding and empathy toward others (Farris & Parke, 1993).

The Drama Teacher's Resource Room

<http://www3.sk.sympatico.ca/erachi/>

The Drama Teacher's Resource Room encourages creative and challenging theatrical experiences and provides teachers and students with lesson plans to improve acting skills as well as other resources to support classroom production.

Content Standard #3: Designing by arranging and developing environments for improvised scenes and informal or formal productions.

Students learn to create an environment appropriate for the play and to work collaboratively to construct designs for the environment. It has been shown that student designers have a broader view of theatre than the actors, who often view theatre as a place for gaining self-satisfaction based on audience response (Wright, 2000).

Glossary of Technical Theatre Terms

<http://www.theatre crafts.com/glossary/glossary.shtml>

Many teachers and students find that technical terms in the field of theatre are complicated. This website offers definitions of stagecraft terms and a forum for answering questions about theatrical terms.

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The Original Online Resource for Stage Managers
<http://www.smnetwork.org/>

This site, maintained by a professional stage manager, is an excellent source of help for technical questions. It is a professional site but also a good source of ideas for amateurs.

Content Standard #4: Directing by planning classroom dramatizations, organizing and conducting rehearsals for improvised scenes and informal or formal productions.

Students plan improvisations, demonstrate varied ways of presenting classroom dramatizations or improvised scenes. Traditionally, teachers are the directors in student productions; however, research has concluded that students who have worked as directors gain the deepest understanding of theatre (Wright, 2000).

Introduction to Directing

<http://www.byu.edu/tma/arts-ed/units/1dirunit.htm>

Introduction to Directing is a lesson plan, which takes students step-by-step through the basics of directing. The objective of this unit is to help students learn the fundamentals of directing for the theatre.

Content Standard #5: Researching by finding information to support classroom dramatizations, improvising scenes, and by further evaluating cultural and historical information to support artistic choices.

Students communicate and exchange information with each other about their play, apply their research to script writing, acting, design, and directing choices, and evaluate cultural and historical information for informal or formal productions. Through this experience, students will be motivated and be given the opportunity to develop artistic skills and theatre literacy (Wright, 2000).

Artslynx International Theatre Resources

<http://www.artslynx.org/theatre/index.htm>

The mission of Artslynx International Theatre Resources is to provide the most efficient navigation to valuable information for the student, scholar, educator, and researcher. Teachers and students can utilize this website to search for resources to support their productions.

Content Standard #6: Comparing, connecting, and incorporating art forms by describing and analyzing theatre and other art forms.

Students describe and compare different elements in theatre, express personal reactions to several art forms, and illustrate the integration of arts media. Through theatrical experience, students will discover the unique characteristics of theatre: it is active, collaborative, temporal, interactive, and composite (Farris & Parke, 1993).

Storytelling, Drama, Creative Dramatics, Puppetry & Readers' Theater for Children & Young Adults

<http://falcon.lmu.edu/~ramseyvl/drama.htm>

This website presents various resources for theatre as well as other performance arts. Teachers and students will find it useful for demonstrating, comparing or incorporating the different functions and interaction of various art forms.

Content Standard #7: Analyzing personal preferences and constructing meanings from dramatic play or other productions.

Students articulate emotional responses to personal experiences, support the meaning constructed from their own and others' dramatic performances, analyze and critique the dramatic context, constructively evaluate their own and others' efforts and artistic choices in both informal and formal productions. This standard is supported by an educational concept, "develop through drama," which means that dramatic experience will promote development of the child (Urian, 2000).

Comprehensive Guide To Theater on the Internet

http://www.stetson.edu/departments/csata/thr_wuld.html#Start

This Guide provides varied resources, and includes electronic journals and magazines to support students' advanced studies.

Content Standard #8: Recognizing and analyzing the role of theatre, film, television, and electronic media in our lives.

Students discuss characters and situations in dramas in sociocultural context, analyze drama's impact on our lives, and explore how social concepts such as cooperation and communication apply in theatre and our lives. In this way, students discover how dramatic context, as a vehicle to develop thought and language, can be incorporated in art forms such as literature, visual arts, music, and dance (Farris & Parke, 1993).

Television, Radio, Film, Theatre Internet Resources

http://www.library.sjsu.edu/subject/Theatre_Arts/tares.htm

This site, developed by San José State University, provides broad information for different art forms, and links to professional organizations and research in TV, radio, films, and theatre.

Advanced Professional Development

The struggle for comprehensive theatre education is difficult and ongoing, and many teachers are concerned about dealing with all these standards (Bedard, 1994). Theatre educational organizations provide a broad range of professional services and support to both teachers and students.

American Alliance for Theatre and Education

<http://www.aate.com/>

This professional theatre educator organization provides teachers and students with opportunities to connect with each other and exchange ideas and resources.

Educational Theatre Association's (ETA) website

<http://www.etaassoc.org/default.html.asp>

The ETA provides a broad range of professional services and support such as theatre festivals for students, professional development programs for theatre teachers, a magazine, and a quarterly journal.

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